

<p>GUIDE TO CLASSIFYING PROGRAM AND STAFF SPECIALISTS UNDER THE ECP GROUP TWO PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST POSITION EVALUATION SYSTEM</p>

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist in allocating staff and program specialist positions which are evaluated under the official ECP Group Two Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System. This guide is intended to lend clarification to the official Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System factors.

Definitions

A staff or program specialist position is one-of-a-kind within a department, agency, or the equivalent in scope, or has statewide responsibility for a program or service area. The program or service area must be unique and of paramount significance to the department's primary mission or operation. Staff and program specialists are responsible and accountable for the full range of services or subject matter areas associated with the work. Such responsibilities are not shared. Specialists are recognized as the persons most knowledgeable about a particular professional area and are considered by the agency to be the exclusive subject matter experts for a difficult, complex, and highly technical area. Specialists must be designated as such by the appointing authority; i.e., it is not a responsibility one assumes.

Program specialist positions have well-defined parameters that outline and house the particular concept. The program description is usually written in the form of legislation, departmental rules, policies, or mission statements, and is identified in the department's budget, operating statement, or similar documents. Program specialists typically initiate and have direct involvement in the establishment and maintenance of the policies and procedures that are the foundation of the program. They monitor and oversee the methods used by others and provide expertise in correcting misapplications or misinterpretations of the program's implementation by other staff.

Staff specialists, like program specialists, are assigned unique functions where their expertise is viewed as the exclusive subject matter expert in a particular field of work or professional discipline. They are distinguished from program specialists by their lack of defined program criteria. However, they, too, serve as the department's or agency's sole (meaning only) expert for a difficult and highly technical area.

Both program and staff specialists provide consultation and technical direction to others within and/or outside the department or agency. Some specialists are designated with the authority to ensure that the program objectives are met. In both cases, these assignments comprise the preponderance (greatest percentage of time) of the position's ongoing activities. Specialist positions are typically non-supervisory in nature.

Specialists differ from senior level workers in that the scope, depth, breadth, and responsibility for assignments is of greater significance, sensitivity and importance to the department or agency. Having sole responsibility for a program or specific subject area of a department or agency does not, in and of itself, satisfy specialist criteria. All of the other criteria defined in the official specialist subsystem must also be met.

Independent Contract Project Specialist — Positions in which the predominant and essential function is to serve as the agency's designated technical expert in the professional discipline and contract manager of ongoing independent contractual projects that have substantial financial or programmatic impact on the agency's operation. Such positions have complete operational authority over the contract. Responsibilities include providing programmatic expert technical advice and consultation to the contractor, monitoring the development and delivery of the contractor's work product and taking corrective action where necessary, authorizing work stoppage or continuance, developing contractual arrangements and interpreting contract language to management, and ensuring the project or service is implemented in accordance with the mission of the department. (See Equitable Classification Plan, Group Two, Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System.)

Program Specialist — Positions in which the predominant and essential function is the assigned responsibility for an accepted program that is state-, department-, or agency-wide, or the equivalent in scope. Such positions are responsible for highly complex assignments that have considerable impact and are one-of-a-kind within the organization. Responsibilities include the development of program content, policies, and procedures; program advocacy; oversight of program goal achievement; and provision of authoritative technical direction in all aspects of the program specialty.

Staff Specialist — Positions in which the predominant and essential function is to serve as the expert in a particular specialty area or professional discipline that is state-, department-, or agency-wide or the equivalent in scope. Such positions are responsible for highly complex assignments that have considerable impact and are one-of-a-kind within the organization. Responsibilities include the provision of expert advice in the area of specialty to department management, outside entities, or the public; directing and conducting highly complex studies and analyses without technical direction; and serving as the final recommending authority within the assigned specialty area.

Rating of Specialist Positions

A significant amount of weight is given to a department's recommended factoring of positions, because departmental officials are in the best position to judge the relative worth, value, and significance of their program areas. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the agency establish an internal committee of experts knowledgeable about the mission, goals and programs of the agency. The committee should be comprised of executive-level officials or their designees who have a global perspective regarding the department's programs and

services. This will ensure that the position is fairly and consistently rated using a comparative analysis of its value to the department relative to other program staff specialist positions.

When rating positions, the committee should consider a number of variables, such as level of financial responsibility (e.g., thousands of dollars versus millions); financial, material or other significant impact on the environment; impact on the population; consequence of error; extent of scientific or other research necessary to perform the job; size of the program; impact on other operations within the department and/or on other organizational entities; impact on the agency's mission and policies; whether the program area undergoes constant change or is stable once implemented; the technical difficulty of the work being performed; or whether the program is multi-faceted or relatively narrow in scope.

After identifying and analyzing all relevant variables, the departmental committee then rates the position using the three equally weighted factors defined in the official system:

- I. Job Complexity
- II. Program or Specialty Scope
- III. Impact

Factor I: Job Complexity

This factor measures the guidelines, objectives, and direction the position has available to it, and the range of complexity and job variables associated with the work.

If the position has available to it already established guidelines that are fairly well defined (e.g., already established policies, procedures, reference materials, and other such resource materials), it will typically receive Factor 1. This is the standard rating for most specialist positions. Positions of this type are usually housed within a division or section and receive direction from a manager or division administrator. Positions of this type are usually responsible for relatively well-defined, developed, and stable programs.

If the position must develop and maintain the guidelines, departmental policies, procedures, and other related documents of a program or specialty area, in accordance with general or broader operational (nonspecific) operational policy guidance provided by an executive official (bureau director or higher), it should be rated Factor 2.

It is important to note that while the position's reporting relationship certainly influences its factor assignment to some degree, it does not result in an automatic factor of either Factor 1 or 2. This is because some positions housed in divisions may develop and implement programs that are highly complex in nature and are created in accordance with broad policy directives issued by executive officials. This is a situation where the position has frequent contact

with executive staff, or a “dotted line” reporting relationship to the executive official. Under these circumstances, the position may receive Factor 2. Conversely, some positions reporting to executive officials have available to them specific and well-defined program criteria and guidelines and therefore should be assigned Factor 1.

The complexity of the work and the number of job variables (subject areas) are rated using comparative analysis of the relative technical difficulty of the subject matter associated with the position’s assigned charge and the relative diversity of tasks associated with the work. This can be rated by comparing the duties to those of other specialist positions within the respective professional discipline, or to those of other professional disciplines used by the department. For example, a departmental specialist that has responsibility for developing a program for a division would not normally have the same level of complexity or number of variables as a position that has responsibility for developing a program that crosses multiple or all departmental lines and areas. In this situation, the rating of the job complexity and number of variables for the division specialist would receive a rating of either Factor A or B, depending on the department’s relative analysis of the difficulty of the division’s program areas. (The majority of specialties are rated Factor B.) The position responsible for development of a relatively highly complex departmental program would typically be rated Factor C.

Factor II: Program or Specialty Scope

This factor rates the extent of the specialist’s responsibility for the completed work product, the diversity of program areas, the size and complexity of the program or service being provided, and the position’s interaction with other program or specialty areas.

Within the specialist management responsibility considerations, if a position serves as a technical consultant to others by advising them on the proper methods to be used to accomplish the program objectives, then it is typically rated Factor 3. This is the standard rating for most specialists. If a position not only provides consultation to others on the program or specialty area, but has the authority to countermand the decisions of others to ensure that program standards and goals are maintained, then it may be appropriate to assign a factor rating of 4.

Within program or specialty scope considerations, the relative size and scope of the program or specialty area is best determined by making objective comparisons with other specialty areas. If the program area’s responsibility is of relatively narrow scope (“few”) and it has limited interaction with the other program areas, it should be rated Factor D. If it involves several areas of responsibility and interacts with other program areas, it should be rated Factor E. If it has a large number of diverse responsibilities that requires complex interaction with multiple program areas within and/or outside the department, it should be rated Factor F. The distinction between, “few,” “several,” and “diverse” subject areas of responsibility is admittedly a subjective consideration. However,

agency committees should first establish and then consistently adhere to departmental specific criteria in applying this standard. For example, if a Personnel Management Specialist has responsibility for bargaining unit issues involving several contracts, it should be rated Factor E. However, if it has responsibility for all bargaining unit contracts, it should be rated Factor F because of the diversity in the contracts and the interaction involved in negotiating and implementing them. The standard rating for the typical specialist is Factor E.

Factor III: Impact

This factor measures the type of impact a position has and its relationship (predominant effect of impact) to the mission of the department. If the decisions made by the specialist to accomplish the program's objectives are of normal magnitude, it should be rated Factor 5. If the decisions made by the specialist have unusually critical or significant impact on the department (e.g., result in policy changes or have legal ramifications), it should be rated Factor 6. The majority of positions are rated Factor 5.

The organizational placement of the position can be used to assist in determining its relative impact on the department's mission and relative value to the department, but similar to the other variables, it should not be used as an absolute overriding factor rating measure. If the work assignments and decisions made only affect divisional program areas, it should be rated Factor G. If the decisions made directly impact the program responsibilities of the bureau in which the position is housed, it should be rated Factor H. If the position makes decisions and has the authority to take actions that directly and significantly affect the overall mission of the department and its policies, it should be rated Factor I. For example, some specialists housed in divisions may make decisions that have significant impact on the department's primary mission and should also be rated Factor I, while other specialists that report to bureau directors may only impact the bureau's program areas and should be rated Factor H.

Conclusion

As was previously stated, the purpose of this document is to provide clarification on how to use the official Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System by providing some basic examples of situations that might exist when allocating specialist positions. It is not intended to replace the official system, nor is it all-inclusive of the various considerations that can be given when allocating positions as specialists.

ECP GROUP TWO PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST SYSTEM FACTORS

Michigan Department of Civil Service

FACTOR I: JOB COMPLEXITY

Guidelines, Objectives, and Direction	Range of Complexity and Job Variables		
	A. Complex in nature, with a limited number of variables.	B. Very complex in nature, with a large number of variables.	C. Highly complex in nature, with a very large number of variables.
1. Guidelines are specific and available. Objectives are subject to administrative goals and policy direction.	25	50	75
2. Guidelines are general and not readily available. Objectives are determined by long-range, executive-level goals and policy direction.	50	75	100

FACTOR II: PROGRAM OR SPECIALTY SCOPE

Specialist Management Responsibility	Program/Specialty Area		
	D. Few distinct subject areas, directed toward a relatively narrow program or specialty area.	E. Several distinct subject areas requiring interaction of activities over a broad program or specialty area.	F. Diverse subject areas requiring complex interaction of program or specialty area activities over very broad or diverse program areas.
3. Planning, organizing, consulting, and advising to achieve objectives and goals.	25	50	75
4. Ensuring that proper methods, procedures, or processes are being utilized by others, and direct responsibility for the completed product or project.	50	75	100

FACTOR III: IMPACT

Type of Impact	Predominant Effect of Impact		
	G. Division mission, within the overall bureau and departmental missions.	H. Bureau mission, within the overall departmental mission.	I. Primary mission of the department.
5. Direct impact.	25	50	75
6. Substantial direct impact.	50	75	100

Key: 0 – 119 = 12

120 – 194 = 13

195 – 269 = 14

270 – 300 = 15